

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, December 10, 2020

3:00 p.m.

Remote Meeting

Present: Dennis Grader, Chairperson (3:08), Barbara Kuklewicz, Vice Chairperson, Albert Cummings, Secretary, Jon Dobosz, Director of Parks & Recreation, Jennifer Peterson, Clerk/Bookkeeper

Meeting is being recorded

1. 3:03pm Meeting Called to Order

2. 3:03 pm Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 29, 2020

Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion to accept the December 10,, 2020 minutes; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Approved: 2-0

3. 3:04pm Winter Programs Update:

●**Virtual Sawmill 10K Run, Youth Basketball, Aquatics, etc.**

As expected, registration for the virtual run is slow but usually as race day approaches registration increases. Greenfield Savings Bank will be our only co-sponsor. The youth basketball and aquatics start date will be pushed back to February 1. The Superintendent of GMRSD asked that Jon go to the Board of Health and make adjustments to the department’s plans. Jon met with the Montague Emergency Committee and they had reservations about youth basketball starting January 4, although the school did give us permission. Jon decided to push back the start date for these programs to February 1 as both the school and the Montague Emergency Committee’s hesitancy with number of COVID cases in Montague is high. Winter programming seems to be a long shot at this point.

●**Expansion of Services – “Winter Base Camp”**

During this difficult year, program implementation is difficult but necessary. One idea to expand our programming is having a “winter base camp” at Unity Park and the fieldhouse. This could begin possibly next year when the COVID 19 virus is more under control. We’d rent out our cross country skis, and use the fieldhouse as a warming hut with the wood stove, selling hot coffee, cocoa, and popcorn. People could sit and warm up, utilize the space while participating in outdoor activities in the park. To accommodate residents, Jon recommends, having office hours Tuesday through Saturday. Suzanne LoManto, Cultural Coordinator for the town, stated there could be potential grants for us to purchase additional equipment for such activities. The issue when using grant money is that the programming would have to be occurring during the same year. Jon will continue to work on this.

4. 3:15 pm FY21 Current Operating Budget & Revolving Fund Balances

The Revolving fund continues to run at a loss of approximately \$9,800. With the unlikelihood of our aquatics program running, it seems as though that income won’t help us out of the hole. Through our Operating budget, we will continue to spend funds out of Facilities by using our Part Time Wages line item that wasn’t spent this summer on camp counselor payroll. We purchased a new refrigerator as our current one was very old. Jon is also considering a mini split for the garage area for when we begin to use that area as program space; it will need air conditioning and heat. He would like the Commission to think about this for the future.

5. 3:21pm FY21 Departmental Financial Evaluation

There was nothing out of the ordinary, considering the difficult year we had.

6. 3:24 pm FY22 Operating & Capital Budgets

There was an annual increase in the director’s and clerk/bookkeeper’s wages. There was also an increase in part time wages to accommodate for the minimum wage increase. There were no further questions

7. 3:25pm Parks & Recreation Director’s Reports

●**Whale Spray Feature Water Usage, Summer 2020:** used less water this year. We did shut down the water for a few days because of weather, and equipment maintenance. We also used a different setting on the feature that was a no touch, random setting. Jon is mostly likely to return to the setting that requires someone to press the bollard.

●**Fence at Old Skatepark:** Jon was approached by the owners of Nova Motorcycle wanting to know what we were planning for the fence surround the old skatepark which is their property. The town’s Planning Department contacted us letting us know that there are grant opportunities for beautification such as trees, planting and picnic tables. Jon is interested in pursuing this idea and the land owners are also making plans for the area.

●**Campfires in Parks:** Jon has been asked by a few residents about having campfires in our parks. In theory it’s an idea that Jon likes but knows other departments such as Fire department would need to be involved. The Commission would like time to consider this idea and have input from the fire departments before making any decisions.

Motion: Albert Cummings makes a motion to save the campfires in the park until after Jon talks to the fire departments seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Approved: 3-0

●**Departmental Website:** Our department website will go live tomorrow. Jon is happy with the site.

●**Community Garden Well:** We continue to work on this item. The water department considered connecting the park at the three way intersection on First Street but the Prudential Committee was not in favor of this idea. Jon is hoping to develop a solution for issue.

8. 3:42 pm Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirement

Dennis Grader brought up Jon’s evaluation; wondering if the Commission wanted to take part in this or have just Dennis and Jon meet. Albert and Barbara agreed that the two of them could meet and report back to them at the next meeting.

9. 3:44pm Adjournment

Motion: Albert Cummings makes the motion to adjourn; seconded by Barbara Kuklewicz.

Approved: 3-0

X _____
Albert Cummings, Secretary Date Or _____
Signature Name & Title: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____